

Amendment to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for the preparation of slaughtered poultry for picking wherein bodies of the poultry are scalded comprising introducing heated water vapor into a heated scalding compartment, which is heated to a predetermined temperature, introduced the bodies of the slaughtered poultry into the heated scalding compartment, generating at least one flow of a water vapor-air mixture obtained from within the scalding compartment and guiding the at least one flow of water vapor-air mixture against predetermined regions of at least one of the bodies of the poultry with the scalding being performed without the bodies of the slaughtered poultry being submersed in water.

2. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein water vapor is introduced into a lower region of the scalding compartment.

3. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the scalding compartment is heated to a temperature of about 48°C to 65°C.

4. (Original) A method according to claim 2, wherein the scalding compartment is heated to a temperature of about 48°C to 65°C.

5. (Original) A method according to any of the claim 1, wherein the air present within the scalding compartment is saturated by water vapor.

6. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the bodies of the poultry are passed through the scalding compartment hanging by their feet with a preset velocity along a pathway of a transporting line within the scalding compartment.

7. (Original) A method according to claim 5, wherein a portion of the pathway of the transporting line within the scalding compartment is varied in length.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the flow of the water vapor-air mixture is circulated through the scalding compartment.

9. (Original) A method according to claim 8, wherein the circulation is opened to the outer environment when cooling of the scalding compartment is required.

10. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein the bodies of the poultry within the scalding compartment are transported successively past a plurality of guided flows of the water vapor-air mixture.

11. (Original) A method according to claim , wherein the temperature and vapor content of the water vapor-air mixture are controlled and measured.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 1, wherein a rate of the flow of water vapor-air mixture is controlled and measured.

13. (Currently Amended) A system for the preparation of slaughtered poultry for picking comprising a scalding compartment, a water vapor source for introducing water vapor into the scalding compartment, at least one transporting line for transporting bodies of the slaughtered poultry through the scalding compartment, a flow generation device which generates at least one flow of a water vapor-air mixture within the scalding compartment, and a guiding device for guiding the at least one flow of the water vapor-air mixture against predetermined regions of at least one of the bodies of the poultry, with the scalding being performed without the bodies of the slaughtered poultry being submersed in water.

14. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the device for introducing the water vapor is in the lower portion of the scalding compartment.

15. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the scalding compartment has at least one lock chamber at an inlet area and at least one lock chamber at an outlet area of the transporting line for sealing the water vapor from passing to an exterior of the scaling compartment.

16. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the transporting line is a slaughter line extending through the scalding compartment having a looped pathway having runs running substantially parallel to each other with respect to the bodies of the poultry hanging by their feet in fixed positions.

17. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the transporting line within the scalding compartment has a length which is chosen based upon a required residence time of the bodies of the poultry within the scalding compartment at a preset velocity.

18. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the flow generating generation device includes a fan and a suction line drawing off the water vapor-air mixture from an interior of the scalding compartment and a pressure line which reintroduces the water vapor-air mixture into the scalding compartment.

19. (Original) A system according to claim 18, wherein at least one fan has a flap box associated with the suction line thereof including a flap which moves in response to suction and which seals an opening of the flap box which may be opened to the outer environment when suction is not applied.

20. (Original) A system according to claim 13, wherein the guiding device has nozzle holders arranged within the scalding compartment for arranging and adjusting at least one nozzle in the scalding compartment.

21. (Original) A system according claim 20, wherein a first nozzle holder comprises a horizontal tube having a plurality of nozzles arranged across a length of the at least one transporting line and at a perimeter thereof openings of the nozzle are directed against a predetermined region of the bodies of the poultry transported past the nozzles.

22. (Original) A system according to claim 20, wherein a second nozzle holder comprises a closed end tube extending vertically between the bodies of the poultry comprising a plurality of nozzles disposed along a length of the tube and on a perimeter thereof with each nozzle including a nozzle opening directed against a predetermined region of the bodies of the poultry transported past the nozzle.

23. (Original) A system according to claim 21, wherein the first nozzle holders are in rows with the rows being located between parallel runs of the at least one transporting line which extends in a looped pathway and is part of a slaughter line.

24. (Original) A system according to claim 13, comprising an automatic measuring and controlling system for measuring and controlling temperature and vapor content of the water vapor-air mixture within the scalding compartment.

25. (Original) A system according to claim 13, comprising an automatic measuring and controlling system for measuring and controlling a flow rate of the water vapor-air mixture within the flow generating device.